THE HISTORY OF THE Lancashire Witches.

Containing,

The Manner of their becoming such; their Enchantments, Spells, Revels, merry Pranks, raising of Storms and Tempests, riding on Winds, &c.

The Entertainment and Frolicks which happened among them.

With the Loves and Humours of Roger and Dorothy.

Also, A Treatise of Witches in General.

Conducive to Mirth and Recreation.

The like never before Published.

The HISTORY of the

Lancaſhire Witches.

CHAP. I.

The Lancaſhire Witch's Temptation, and of the Devil's appearing to her in ſundry Shapes, and giving her Money

LAncaſhire is a famous and noted place abounding with hills, rivers, woods, paſtures, and pleaſant towns; many of which are of great antiquity. It has alſo been famous for Wi ches, and the ſtrange pranks they have played.

Therefore, ſince the name of Lancaſhire Witches have been ſo frequent in the mouths of old and young, and many imperfect ſtories have been rumoured abroad, it would doubtleſs tend to the ſatisfaction of the reader to give ſome account of them in their merry ſports and paſtimes.

Some time ſince lived one Mother Cuthburt, in a little hovel at the bottom of a Hill called Wood-and-Mountain-Hill, in Lancaſhire. This woman had two luſty daughters, who both carded and ſpun for their living, yet was very poor, which made them often repine at, and lament their want. One day as mother Cuthburt was ſauntering about the hill-ſide, picking the wood off the buſhees, out ſtarted a thing like a rabbit, which run about two or three times, and then changed

into a hound, and afterward into a man, which made the old Beldame to tremble,

Beldam to tremble, yet she had no power to run away: So putting a purse of money in her hand, and charging her to be there the next day, he immediately vanished away, and old Mother Cuthbert returned home, being somewhat disturbed between jealousy and fear.

CHAP. II.

Strange and wonderful Apparitions; how one Witch had Power to make another; and other strange Things.

THE old woman opened not her purse till she came home, and then found in it ten angels; so calling her daughters, she told them what had happened. The wenches rejoiced the treasure of the house encreased, that they might stuff their bellies with beef and pudding, which they had long been strangers to; and advised their mother to go again as she was ordered, and so she did. The first thing she saw was a tree rising out of the ground, which moved towards her, and to her great surprize multiplied into a very thick wood round her, so that she was afraid

of losing herself; when on a sudden she saw a house, and heard the sound of musick.—This appeared more strange, however, she took courage and went towards it, where she found a matron standing at the door, who very kindly invited her in, where she found a great many men women, all dancing and revelling; and the house

appeared like a stately palace, and tables furnished with a variety of delicates.—The dance being ended, she was desired to sit at the table with the rest; but she scrupled it at first; till at length being hungry she fell roundly to.—After dinner the matron which received her, by striking the floor with her wand, caused

ner the matron which received her, by ſtriking the floor with her wand, cauſed divers of the familiars in the ſhapes of cats, bears, apes, &c. to enter and dance antic dances, whilſt ſhe played on the gridiron and tongs. This done, taking mother Cuthbert aſide, ſhe demanded how ſhe liked their cheer and ſport? She anſwered, Very well; but deſired to know where ſhe was, and her company? Mother Crady then told her that ſhe was Witch of Penmure, a great mountain in Wales, and the reſt were her countrywomen of the ſame faculty; and being deſirous to have her of the fraternity, ſhe had contrived this way to entertain her, to ſhew that ſhe might always live jocund and merry.—Mother Cuthbert overcome with perſuaſions, conſented, when immediately they anointed her breaſt with a certain ointment, then ſpeaking a charm or two, they gave her the reſt to uſe upon occaſion; and alſo in another box a little thing like a mole, that was to be her imp. So all mounting upon a coal ſtaff, away they flew, and ſhe with them; but they left her at the door of her own houſe, and kept ſtill on their way with the wind.

CHAP. III.

A Lanchaſhire Witch enchants the Mayor of the Town, who had cauſed her to be whipped; with the Circumſtance attending.

MOTHER Cuthbert being thus entered into the ſociety of Witches, by the force of her ointment, and council of her Imp, who could ſpeak when he pleaſed, and turned himſelf into divers ſhapes finding the power ſhe had, began to play many pranks.

Some time before this the Mayor of Lancaſter, had cauſed Mother Cuthbert to be whipt for breaking his pales to make her a fire in the cold winter, which ſhe reſented much; and now knowing her power to revenge it, ſhe trudges thither, where ſhe found him carouſing with many friends. She took an opportunity to ſlip a letter into his hands, and retired unknown, which he no ſooner had peruſed, but telling his company he muſt run a race, he immediately went into the next room, and ſtripped himſelf ſtark-naked, then taking a hand whip he ran

into the ſtreet, laſhing his ſides and buttocks, crying, There he goes, there he goes; I win! I win! whilſt the people followed, calling to him to ſtay, thinking he was diſtracted; yet he run on to the further end of the town, laſhing himſelf till he was bloody. At which time coming to his wits, he was in the greateſt conſternation imaginable, ſwearing the devil had put this trick upon him; for all the time he imagined he had been on horſeback, and was riding a race, not feeling the laſhes he gave himſelf, till he had compleated his number and filled the meaſure of the Witches reſentment.

CHAP. IV.

The old Woman's two Daughters become Witches; and one of them in the Shape of a Mare, is revenged upon her falſe Sweetheart and Rival.

MOther Cuthbert growing more and more perfect in her art, reſolved to bring in her daughters for a ſnack, and thereupon communicates to them all that had befell her.—They were contentto be ruled by their mother, and ſhe anoint-

ed both of them and uſed the beſt means ſhe was able to make them perfect in their new trade.

Their names were Margery and Cicely, the firſt was courted by Roger Clodpate, a plain downright country fellow; but he was wheedled from her by Dorothy, a gentleman's dairy maid not far diſtant. This vexed Margery, and made her reſolve to be revenged for it; ſo one day as they went abroad into the fields, about

courtſhip, ſhe, by caſting up duſt in the air, and other enchantments, raiſed up a mighty ſtorm of rain, which ſo ſwelled the ditches, that they overflowed in their way, and ſtopped them; but as they began to think of going back, Margery im-

ſhape of a black mare, and came gentle towards them; when Roger, glad of th opportunity, firſt mounted his ſweetheart and then got up himſe f. But they were no ſooner in the middle of the water, than ſhe threw them heels over head, and run away laughing, ſoon recovering her ſhape; while Roger and Doll were in a piteous caſe. and forced to trudge home like drowned rats, with the ſtory of their unfortunate diſaſter.

CHAP. V.

A Witch reſcues a Man who was going to Goal, and plagues the Bailiffs, by leading them a Dance over Hedge and Ditch.

A Poor man being arreſted by a cruel creditor for debt, and he not being able to pay it, they were carrying him to Lancaſter goal, when mother Cuthbert met them, and deſired to know the matter. The officers anſwered her very ſurlily, puſhing her aſide, which raiſing her choler, ſhe ſaid, But you ſhall let him go before we do part. And they ſaid, He ſhould not. Whereupon ſhe bid the poor

man ſtop his ears cloſe: And then ſhe drew out a pipe, which had been given her by the Witch of Penmure, and then ſet to piping, and led them through hedges and thorns, over ditches, banks and poles, ſometimes tumbling, and other times tearing and bruiſing their fleſh; while the poor fellow got time enough to make his eſcape, and the catch-poles cried out for mercy, thinking the devil had led them a dance. At length ſhe left them in the middle of a ſtinking pond, to ſhift for themſelves.

CHAP. V.

Of a Lancaſhire Witch being in Love with a Gentleman; of her haunting him in the Shape of a Hare, and obtaining her Ends.

CICELY, the youngeſt daughter of the Lancaſhire Witch, being in Love with a gentleman's ſon about a mile from their home, was reſolved to have him in her arms at any rate; wherefore knowing he admired hunting, ſhe often turned herſelf into a hare, to make him ſport,

houſe, for when he went that way he was uſed to call and chat with them, the which cauſed in Cicely the firſt paſſion; but once his had like to have proved fatal, for her charm wanting ſomewhat of its force, one of the foremoſt hounds catched her by the haunches, juſt as ſhe was entering her creephole, and gave her a terrible pinch, and happy was it for her that ſhe was ſo near, or her loving had been for ever ſpoiled.—The young man commonly loſing the hare about this houſe, began to wonder, and ſuppoſing it to have run in at the ſink, he entered the houſe, where he found Cicely rubbing of her backſide; but not meeting what he ſought, nor looking for ſuch a tranſformation, he departed, and ſhe for the future grew cautious of ſhewing him any more ſport of that kind. But when he was going to be married to a beautiful young gentlewoman, ſhe by enchantment cauſed the lady to loſe herſelf in a wood, and there caſt her into a deep ſleep for a day and a night.—In the mean time ſhe perſonated the bride, enjoyed the bridegroom by caſting a miſt before his eyes; but knowing it could not long continue,

ſhe caſt him likewiſe into a deep ſleep and then fetched the young Lady to his arms, that when they both awaked they thought they had been all the time together.

CHAP. VII.

Mother Cuthbert enchants ſeveral Thieves and takes away their Money; with the Manner of ſetting Spells.

OLD Mother Cuthbert going along the road, ſhe overheard ſome thieves bragging of a mighty purchaſe they had made; whereupon ſhe reſolved with herſelf, that ſhe would come in for a ſhare, and accordingly ſhe muttered ſome words, on which the horſes began for to ſtumble, which made them curſe and ſwear —At length they ſuppoſed they heard the rattling of clubs and ſtaves, as if the whole country had been up in arms to ſeize them; and finding they could not ſpur their horſes on, nor make them ſtir a foot, they got off, leaving their portmantuas behind them, and ran away on foot. The prize ſhe conveyed home, and hearing ſome poor people had been rob-

ed, ſhe gave them back what they had loſt The fright the rogues were put into was cauſed by inchantment, in which ſhe was ſo good a proficient, that ſhe often would ſet ſpells on the high way, ſo that any being robbed, the rogues had no power to get away.

The Deſcription of a SPELL.

A Spell is a piece of paper written with magic characters, fixed in the critical ſeaſon of the moon, and conjunction of the planets; or ſometimes by repeating mit-

tical word.—But of these there are many sorts.

CHAP. VII.

The Manner of a Witch Feast; or a General Meeting.

THere being a General Meeting of the Witches, to consult for merry pranks, and to be even with any who had injured them, one of them must need bring her husband with her; but charged him and made him promise that whatever he saw or heard, he should not speak a word of it. To this he promised to be obedient. He was carried thither in the night, but he knew not which way. And there he found a stately palace (to his thinking) furnished with goods of exceeding value, and it shined in the night with artificial lights as at noon day. Here they had all manner of good cheer, and he was as frolicksome as the merriest. The man observed his covenant till he came to eat, when looking about and seeing no salt, (for it seems Witches never use any) he before he was aware, cried out, What in God's name, have we no salt here? Up-

God's name, have we no salt here? Upon this all the lights immediately went out, and the company flew away. So dreadful is the name of God to those servants of Satan. Storms of rain and hail,

attended with lightening and terrible claps of thunder ensued. The rain poured on him, the wind blew, and instead of a palace, when day light appeared, he found himself in an old uncovered barn, on a steep hill, about twenty miles from home. And from that time he never desired to go with his wife to see curiosities.

CHAP. IX.

The Humours of Roger and Doll, with the Manner how they were ſerved by a Lancaſhire Witch.

ROGER and Dorothy being got in a merry humour, one day meeting with Margery, began to ſwear at her, and called her Leaden Heels; but ſhe paſſed by as if ſhe minded it not.—They had not far to go before there was a ſtile to go over; but when they were on the top they could not get down on either ſide, fancying there were ponds of water round about them, till ſome travellers came by, who finding them thus mounted on her wooden horſe in a ſtrange poſture, made them diſmount.—However, not ſatisfied, ſhe watched their motions, and found them enter into a barn that ſtood by the road, where the cows uſedo be driven in to be milked.—There being ſeated upon the ſtraw, toying together, and wondering at what had happened, they proceeded to a little more familiar together, reſolving as the marriage was agreed on, to have

taſte before hand. But juſt as they were going to offer upon Love's altar, Margery, who ſtood there inviſible, ſprinkled Roger with a certain duſt, which changed his very countenance, making it appear to his miſtreſs like an aſs's head, which ſo frighted her that ſhe gave a luſty ſpring, and throwing him quite over, ſhe got up running and crying out, The Devil! the Devil! — This ſo terrified Roger, that without pulling up his breeches, he followed, crying out, What ails you, my dear? what ails you? — In this manner, to the laughter of a great number of people, they ran until they were ſo tired they were forced to lie down, being no longer able to hold out.—Thus at this time her revenge was ſatisfied.

CHAP.

CHAPX.

How ſome Witches revelling in a Gentleman's Houſe, ſerved the Servants who ſurpriſed them.

IT happened one time that a great number of Lancaſhire Witches were revelling in a gentleman's houſe, in his abſence, and making merry with what they found, the dogs not daring to ſtir, they having, it ſeems, power to ſtrike them mute.—However, during their frolick

ſome of the ſervants c me home and thinking they had been ordinary thieves, went to ſeize them: but they happened to ca ch a Tartar; for each taking one, they flew away with them, who in vain c lled for help, till they had lodged them on the top of very high trees; and then raiſed prodigi us ſtorms of thunder and lightening, with hard ſhowe s of rain, they left them there to do pennance for heir intruſion.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

A brief Treatise on Witches in General; with several Things worthy of Note

ABout this time great search was made after Witches, and many were apprehended; but most of them gave the hangman and the gaoler the slip; though some hold, that when a witch is taken she hath no power to avoid Justice.—It happened as some of them were going in a cart to be tried, a coach passed by, in which appeared a person like a Judge, who calling to one, bid her be of good comfort, for neither she nor any of her company should be harmed; and in that night all the prison locks flew open, and they made their escape. And many when they have been cast into the water for a trial have swam like a cork. One of them boasted she could go over the sea in an egg-shell. It is held on all hands they adore the Devil, and become his bond-slaves, to have for a term of years, their pleasure and revenge. And indeed many of them are more mischievous than others,

in laming and deſtroying cattle, and in drowning ſhips at ſea by raiſing ſtorms. — But the Lancaſhire Witches we ſee chiefly divert themſelves in merriment, and are therefore found to be more ſociable than the reſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

A ſhort Deſcription of the famous Lapland Witches.

THE Lapland Witches, they tell us, can ſend winds to ſailors, and take delight in nothing more than raiſing o ſtorms and tempeſt, which they effect by repeating certain charms, and throwing up ſand in the air. The beſt way to avoid their power is, to believe in God, who will not ſuffer them to hurt us; for here they are held to be reſtrained. — As many miſtake their children and relations

to be bewitched, when they die of diſtempers ſomewhat ſtra ge to the unſkilful; ſo one poor woman or other is falſely accuſed of things which they are entirely ignorant of.

This may ſuffice as to what comically or really relates to Witches; or ſuch as are imagined to be poſſeſſed with Evil and Familiar Spirits.

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